

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2012

ASB SPRING NEWSLETTER

May 18, 2012



News For Students and their Families

Arizona School for the Blind, Tucson Campus

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Letter from the Principal

It's hard to believe that the school year has come to an end. You will see from the articles below that the semester has been jam-packed with hard work, wonderful events and amazing accomplishments. We started off in January with the 100 Year Anniversary kickoff – a ceremony at the University of Arizona, and a march, with banners, to the school. Our celebration continued throughout the semester, with another great performance by Stories that Soar! in January, Frontier Day in February, the Cultural Arts Festival in March, and the “Night in Paris”-themed Prom in May. Back in February, we also held the first regional Braille Challenge for the entire state of Arizona. The anniversary celebrations culminated this year at the ASB Graduation, with the appearance of the illustrious Dr. Tuck Tinsley, President and CEO of the American Printing House of the Blind. The full year of celebration will occur next October at our Homecoming and Alumni Reunion on October 6th.

So many people made this year a successful one for our students. Particular thanks go out to the ASB Parent Staff Organization for all of the events they helped to put on, the latest being the wonderful staff recognition luncheon on May 11th. Thanks also to our teachers, instructional aides, related service providers, administration, and all of the support staff that work so hard to help our students be successful.

Please mark your calendars. Registration for the 2012-13 School Year will take place on Sunday, August 5th from 9:00 am – 3 pm.

Have a great summer - see you in August!

Best,
Samuel Ace



Title One

Our Title One program has helped several of our students become more successful in Language Arts and Math. Thank you to Theresa Court (Title One Math Specialist), and Shawn Bourgeois (Title One Accessibility and Language Arts Specialist) for all of their efforts this year. The program will continue next school year.

Writing

By the students in Ms. Serino's Elementary School Class

Every Thursday is poetry day in our class. We wrote a lot of different kinds of poems this year: acrostic, haiku, ABCB, cinquain, blazon, shapes, diamante, and a couplet. Here is an example of an ABCB pattern poem that our class wrote.

My Dog

This is my dog,
He's very handsome.
When people see him they say,
"Where'd he come from?"
This is my dog,
He loves to run.
Every morning we get up
And have some fun.
This is my dog,
He loves to steal chips.
He thought he was sneaky
But had crumbs on his lips.

Our writing notebooks are so full; they might burst like a balloon by May 25th!

~ Lisa Serino (Elementary School)

TAG Club

By Shawn Bourgeois (Assistive Technology Teacher)

Four dedicated students set to work developing a new technology club this school year. The students--Armando, Chris A., Jonathan, and Ryan--started in the fall by agreeing on a purpose and mission for the club. They wanted to become helpers for staff and students with Braille and auditory technologies (and become general technology gurus) here at ASDB. They also set their sights on becoming a part of the larger world community for blindness adaptive technology. Their tech club mission includes a quest for knowledge, motivation to learn new technology, helping in their community, and honorably representing their school by demonstrating the six pillars of character.

The students named their club TAG, which stands for Technology Assistance Group. TAG members have tested iPads, a variety of braille displays, book players and Mac computers. They have prepared themselves to help others as new technology is rolled out to students and teachers.

The TAG club is already looking forward to the next school year. They are learning how to develop their own web site. They plan to take some field trips and visit other places that have assistive technology to try out. TAG members will also continue to build skills that help them qualify for work education opportunities.

Here are some club members' thoughts about the TAG experience:



This year was the building phase. Next year TAG will be ready to hit the ground running, and it will be open for new members. If you are a technology enthusiast in 8th through 12th grade, please consider joining TAG.

ASB Music Program Takes New Direction

By Connie Gajewski (Supervising Teacher)

Under the direction of our new music teacher Kate Scally, ASB students have presented three performances this semester. On May 8th Elementary students performed two short musical plays they wrote together, "Bob the Frog Goes to Find his Friend" and "Only a Dream". Middle School and High School students presented a concert on May 9th that included many songs along with two original musical plays. "Miss Kate's" music program has added the element of original songs and plays written individually or collaboratively. In addition to the two group concerts, several students who have studied instruments under Ms. Scally's instruction presented our first recital on May 14th. We are very excited about the opportunities our music program has provided to ASB students, and we look forward to next year!



Junior Blind Olympics

By Ruth Parsons, TVI/COMS ASDB Tucson campus

ASDB was able to send 61 students to participate in the annual Junior Blind Olympics, an annual event in Los Angeles sponsored by the Junior Blind of America. Our students did a great job representing the school. Josh Smith won the award for the most inspirational athletic. He tried all the events even though they were difficult and always did so with enthusiasm. The students competed in events such as goal ball, rock climbing, rowing, archery, long jump, 50-yard dash and more. While in California we also had the opportunity to go to the Santa Monica Pier and Six Flags Amusement park. We came home with many medals in all the events. There were so many students showing me their medals after the event, that I could not keep track of them all! I will have to



list them in the next newsletter when the sponsoring organization sends out the written results.

The students who participate in the event come from all over Arizona to represent our school. It takes a lot of planning and fund-raising to send that many students. Staff, parents and volunteers are on duty the whole time, but all have a great time watching the students. We hope to send the same numbers or more next year. If you have a child who would like to go or wish to make a donation, please contact Ruth Parsons at 520-770-3439.



Photos By Luke S. Howell

RP PRIDE

By Ed Gervasoni (O&M) and Kristi Thomas (Counselor)

At ASB, we have a group of students who all share the same eye condition called RP (Retinitis Pigmentosa). RP is a progressive eye condition that usually starts out as night blindness and during the

day as tunnel vision. Several years ago, these students started coming together as a group and they called their group the RP Pride Club. As well as sharing the same eye condition, these students share and support each other with their unique challenges and successes that come from having RP. Currently, we have twelve students participating in the club.

This school year, the RP Pride Club had four events. One was the annual holiday cookie making party – where the students come together and make holiday cookies for themselves and others. This was our seventh year of this activity and it has become quite a tradition for the group! One of our students has been doing it since the beginning and he is now graduating! All of the club members wish him the best of luck!! The students also went on three evening outings. The first outing was called “A Progressive Dinner Outing”. During this outing – students traveled by foot and bus to three different restaurants. The first restaurant was to have appetizers, the second was for the main meal and the third was to have dessert. Students planned the transportation route and had to budget their money to be sure they had enough to cover all three restaurants. Some decided to pool their money in order to expand their options. They also had to figure out how much to tip and how to split the bill if necessary. The second outing included dinner and a night hike!

The students chose an Italian restaurant located about a mile from the school that they walked to and then went for a challenging hike under the full moon in the Tucson Mountains. Unfortunately, the moon did not rise until we were about back to the vans! But, this forced all of the students to use their canes, which emphasized how much the canes can help them at night. The final outing of the year was called “Central Rendezvous.” During this outing the students broke into small groups of two or three and had a mission to travel by bus, foot, and for some by taxi to pick up an assortment of snacks. The group then all met at a central location in town for a nighttime picnic.

Having this group helps the students realize that they are not alone and that several others have this same eye condition and varying degrees of vision. They also learn that assistive tools, i.e. canes, penlights, etc., can be beneficial. They can use these tools in a non-threatening environment and everyone else around them is using them too!!

Students Against Bullying!

By Kristi Thomas (Counselor)

This year at ASDB, we have spent a lot of time educating our students on what is bullying and the importance of being a bystander and how that can really make a difference. Research shows that a bystander (witness) that stands up and speaks out has the biggest impact on stopping bullying. This can be done by saying something supportive to the person being bullied, saying something to the bully, or letting an adult know. ASDB is involved with a community-wide anti-bullying task force sponsored by the Fund for Civility, Respect, and Understanding. This group sponsored a statewide Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest for students to create a 30-second PSA showing a solution to stop bullying. Some of the ASB MS students and our UA School Counseling Practicum Student, Tyler Williams, decided that they wanted to participate in this contest. These students and Mr. Williams got together to work on this project. The students created the idea, wrote the script, starred, filmed and directed the PSA! Over 90 submissions were received and our PSA was chosen to be part of a 40-minute video montage that was shown at the Loft Cinema! Although, we were not a grand prize winner, the students were excited to know their video was up on the big screen!

To view ASB's PSA, go to <http://endofbullying.com/school-for-the-blind-anti-bullying-psa/>

To learn more about anti-bullying resources, go to www.endofbullying.com.



JAVA Junior

By Steve Hameroff (HS Teacher)

The end of the school year is also bringing to a close Java Junior, aka "The Pig Cookie People". This announcement is to thank our many and wonderful customers from all over campus - from administration and HR, to the Kachina corridor (what we affectionately call Boardwalk and Park Place); from transportation, maintenance, the HS portables, the middle school secretaries and administrative assistants - we truly could go on and on. Please know that every time you purchased a cochito or coffee or water you enhanced social communication and helped develop functional skills with our students. Of course none of this would be possible without the help of Judy and Dora at Java Express.

Next year, thanks to a grant written by Eva Prince, we will have spiffy new uniforms. So the legacy of Jerry Meyerowitz (originator of Java Jr.) will continue. Have a great summer. And as we like to say at the conclusion of each sale, "Thank you for your business!"

Summer Fun!

By The OT/PT Department at ASB

This past school year, the OT/PT department joined forces with the online charity, Donors Choose (www.donarschoose.org). Through this organization, the department has received new equipment to further their goals and services for children who are blind and visually impaired. The department was fortunate to receive three funded projects. A fourth project called Sensory Challenges has been accepted and is currently waiting donor funding.

One of the projects funded this past year was called Development is Fun. This project provided new tools for developing skills such as body awareness and proprioception (knowing where one's body is in

space). These skills are important for students. Lack of development in these areas results in difficulty with activities such as standing in line, sitting properly in a chair, or climbing on the playground equipment. These students often push too hard with a crayon or pencil or scrub when attempting to read Braille. Often these children are thought to be “clumsy”.

There are many activities that help develop body awareness. Summer is the perfect time to get out and develop these skills. Tumbling, swimming and climbing all help to develop proprioception. As well as activities like push-ups, wheelbarrow races, and playing tug-o-war games. When cooling off inside, have the child help around the house by pulling, pushing or carry objects. Play games where you identify body parts or use music to encourage action songs that use body parts like Hokey Pokey. Lastly, talk with your child about personal space versus general space. Have them explore each space as you define it for them. Let them “feel” the difference so they can begin to make sense of the space around them. Bottom line, having a competent body is one of the most important precursors to becoming a competent Braille reader.

Have fun this summer!

Art Shed!

Art Shed Students Receive Another Award

By Aurora Begay (Student)



Maraya G., a fifth grader in Dawn Smiddy's Art Shed Program, painted a watercolor called “Disneyland” that won 3rd place in the American Printing House for the Blind's ArtInsight Competition. When drawing Disneyland, Maraya thought of something colorful and Disneyland came to mind. “I was thinking about the main characters and I thought of Mickey Mouse.”

This upcoming October, she will be flying to Louisville, Kentucky where she will receive her award in person. Maraya is happy but nervous about accepting her award. She expects her trip to be exciting and would like to go sightseeing while in Louisville. Maraya told her grandparents that she won an art competition and they were excited and proud of her. As for words of inspiration for her fellow artists, she says; "Keep in mind to always use your imagination!"

Miss Smiddy says that each year students have received recognition from local and national art competitions. "Our students understand that their experiences in life, culture and emotions are all part of their approach to creating wonderful works of art."

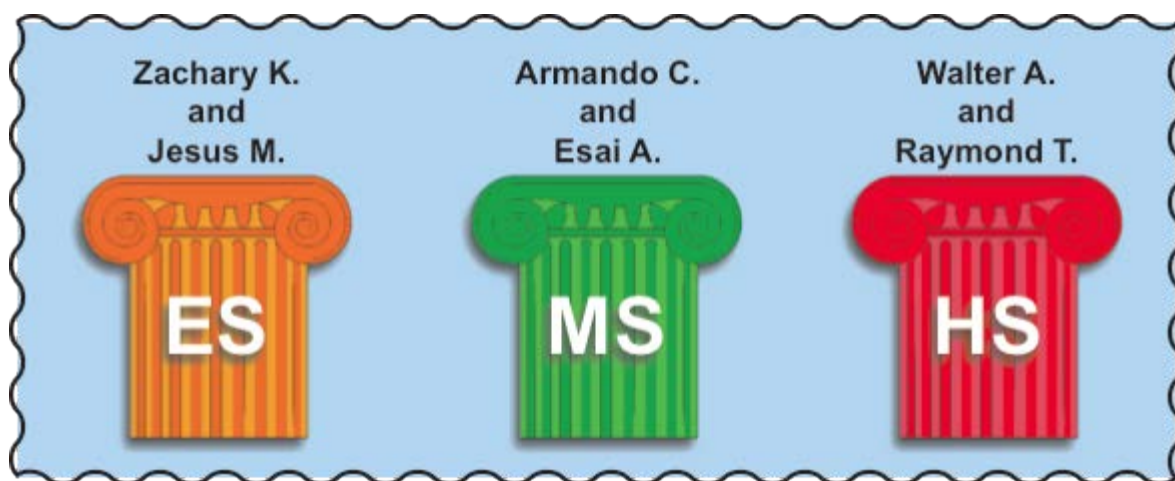
Character Counts! at ASB!

By Aurora Begay (Student)

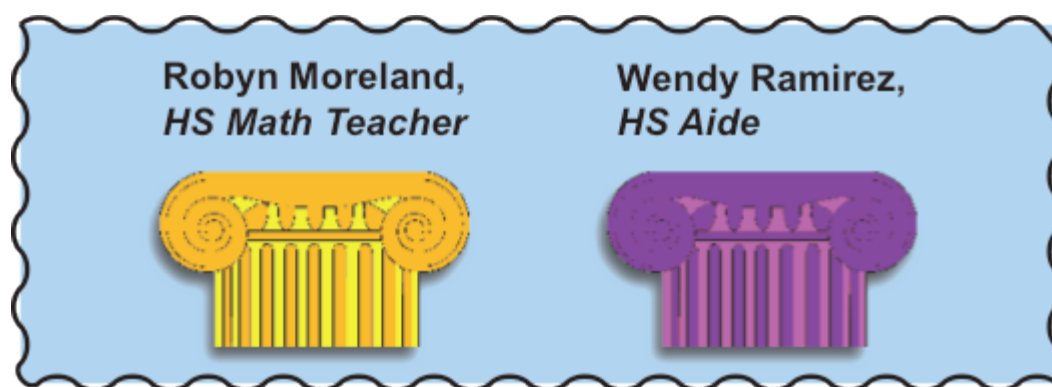


This is our 8th year of using Character Counts! at ASDB. The Character Counts! program is a character education program that is implemented in our school and many other schools across the nation. It is implemented in the classroom, through activities, and sports. Character Counts! has broken down character into six different traits (pillars). The six pillars are Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. The Athletic Department, also strongly believes that students have to do well in school and demonstrate good citizenship on and off the court in order to play sports. Our school believes that every student should put their best effort into school and always demonstrate their best behavior on and off campus. We encourage all of our parents to continue this discussion with their child(ren) at home over the summer.

We had our 6th annual Character Counts! Award assembly on May 8th. The students had so much fun during the assembly! Every student received a silicone bracelet with the name of a character pillar on it. They were also throwing beach balls around the auditorium that had each of the character pillars labeled on it. Twelve students from ASD and ASB were the actors in a skit on negative and positive behavior related to the character pillars. As for the awards, we select two students from each department (Elementary, Middle, and High School). The students were nominated by teachers and staff from across campus for demonstrating their best character all year! Those students are...*drum roll please*.....



We also asked all of our students to nominate a teacher and an Instructional Aide who they think has demonstrated all six character pillars throughout the year. All of their names were put into the basket and we drew out their names at the assembly. Their names are....*drum roll please*...



Congratulations to our students and staff!! Keep up the good work and showing our campus that Character Counts! at ASDB!!

We all wish you a safe and wonderful summer!!

Above and Beyond

By Lenetta Lefko (O&M) and Erin Keller (HS Science), Above and Beyond Coordinators

Above and Beyond has had an amazing first year as a fledgling program! Due to a grant from the Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation, we were able to hit the ground running!

In September, we took 9 middle school students and 4 staff to camp for 4 days and 3 nights at a great campsite near Sedona. During this trip, students took data on trip costs including food, mileage, gas, etc. Each student was given a writing assignment where they took a half an hour to quietly reflect on their surroundings, away from the group. They created poetry based on their observations during this time. Students also learned about the wildlife and explored the food chain. They shared information with the group about each animal they were assigned. Based on this, students had to assess the order of the food chain.

This 'outdoor classroom' also extended to natural observation during walks and hikes.

The middle school students each took turns doing campsite chores, rotating through dishwashing, cooking, serving, and campsite cleaning. Many of the students had not previously camped so brushing teeth, keeping themselves clean and handling other personal needs in a rugged environment was a new experience!

All 9 middle school students completed a 3 mile hike, independently traveling with only the benefit of a few verbal directions and the use of trekking poles. The next day, 6 of these students then completed an eight mile round trip hike with the last half a challenging, rocky, narrow path. Again, these students completed this trip with minimal assistance... lending an occasional backpack handhold to get around a precipitous ledge. The hike was worth it! The students took a refreshing swim in a cold swimming hole.

In November, seven students from MS and HS went to Catalina State Park for a day hike and a campfire picnic. These students learned how to use the trekking poles and then went on to complete two and three mile hikes with support from the ASB Orientation and Mobility Team. The students were enthusiastic outdoors explorers, climbing trees, forging new paths and exploring the desert plants and rocks.



The HS students' trip that happened in March was also at the campsite near Sedona. These 6 students completed the eight mile hike, swam and had all the same opportunities that the MS students had. The high schoolers completed a writing assignment also. Theirs was to sit quietly near the stream in the camp chairs, braille writers at the ready. After observing their surroundings, they compiled a list of words and used word associations that gave them the opportunity for some personal insight. It was amazing to see the effort that these students put into this, pouring their thoughts onto paper, many of them taking several sheets of paper to catch their thoughts.

During this trip the students were challenged to create a rain-catch system as if they were in 'survival' mode without water resources. In teams of 3, they were given a handful of 'garbage' type items and were allowed to use natural items such as rocks, sticks, leaves and the ground. Since rain was (unfortunately!) in the forecast, we left these up to see who would 'win'! The students then persevered through a cold rainy night and woke to snow! It was a tough campsite breakdown, but we made it and the students now have a story to share!

During both the MS and HS trips, students were aware that they were 'competing' to participate in a final trip. This competition was to determine several things, who has a strong, positive attitude; an adventuresome spirit; physical stamina; the ability to work as a team; and the willingness to do their fair share of work.

Our final trip of 2012 was a white water rafting trip- what a unique and amazing experience! We used a guide company called Mild to Wild. They took us on



the trip called "24 hours on the Salt". Three MS and 1 HS student spent 6 hours rafting on a Friday spent a cold and wet night near the Salt River and awoke to a light rain on Saturday morning! After a great breakfast, we all bundled up into wetsuits to complete our journey. Four hours of fun rapids and splashing brought us to our pullout location.

Four hours of fun rapids and splashing brought us to our pullout location. After we returned to our vehicle and changed into warm clothes we headed to another campsite.... "what's that light colored stuff alongside the road?" one of the students asked as we drove to this site. "I've never seen

snow before!" Originally we were going to stay the night at this location, but we decided just to have a big fire, roast some marshmallows and eat some Dutch Oven chicken pot pie. As the students had snowball fights, a fire was started and food was prepared. S'Mores were eaten next to the fire with snow flurries blowing. Even though we came home a day early, the trip was a memorable one!

Next year will be filled with new experiences and challenges and we look forward to creating life-long memories for the students. We recommend that you take time to enjoy the beauty of Arizona, we sure do!

Frontier Day 2012

By Ken Ball (HS Social Studies)

The February event for the celebration of ASDB's 100-Year Anniversary was a historical celebration that was called Frontier Day. Our focus was on the history of ASDB and how it complements the history of Arizona.

Workshops were provided by the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum, the Arizona State Museum, the Arizona Wildlife Museum, the Arizona Rose Theater and the Miniature Miracles. Volunteer from the Arizona Historical Society dressed as Mountain Men and



prospectors. We had members of the Tucson Model A Ford Club and the Tucson Classic Car Club bring in vintage automobiles. The ASB PSO provided an obstacle course for the students to unwind.

Through our focus on the history of ASDB and Arizona the students learned about the cooperative nature between our agency and these community partners and how they can assist us to carry out ASDB's mission. This was a wonderful learning experience for the students and staff at ASDB.

Homecoming 2012

ASDB will continue the 100-Year Celebration during Homecoming October 4 – 6 2012. Along with the traditional Volleyball game and football game on Saturday we are planning an ASB Alumni Concert and an ASB Goalball demonstration. ASDB campus is going to be open to the ASDB alumni on Thursday and Friday October 4th and 5th. Please check the ASDB Alumni website for additional information.

<http://asdbalumni.blogspot.com/>



Palo Verde

**Sarah Allen (Master Teaching Parent),
Palo Verde Residence Hall**

This semester has flown by! Looking back at all the events we've participated in is truly amazing. What students and staff have accomplished is remarkable. We have had several new students join us, and have worked to create a homelike atmosphere, while incorporating the necessary skills to lead independent lives. The recent moves to Ocotillo and Palo Verde have been wonderful, and the kids have quickly settled into their new surroundings. Recently the students attended Jam Sessions downtown where they learned about the history of Hip-Hop culture and break dancing. They also attended a Block Party hosted by local High School students that involved musical, theatrical and poetic performances. We went to the Pima County Fair, and enjoyed the carnival atmosphere as we toured local animal and craft exhibits. As the year comes to an end, the pressure of finals knocking at the front door, we still have fun activities planned for our students. Some students will attend a photography exhibit of Frida Kahlo. We've also planned a tour of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, a trip to the Reid Park Zoo and finally our year-end party at Peter Piper Pizza that will celebrate the close of the school year and everyone's wonderful accomplishments.

**5th Annual Easter Beep Egg Hunt
Jeffrey Hyde (Master Teaching Parent)**

Thanks to the Pioneers and the Tucson Firemen! On April 4th, our VI students enjoyed looking for large beeping eggs, while our deaf students looked for eggs filled with candy. In addition to the fire truck, which our students enjoyed playing on, we also had a cherry picker truck with a large bunny in the basket. He threw candy down for all our students to enjoy. Later all the students received a large basket of toys, candy and a ball. All the students really seemed to enjoy the special day and are already looking forward to next years. Thanks to all the people who made the Easter Egg Hunt possible for our students and staff this year.

**Fire Department Barbecue
Maryann Hedrick (Master Teaching Parent)**

On May 2nd the VI department participated in a day of great fun here at ASDB. We had a BBQ and the Tucson Fire Department arrived to help cool down the kids and staff with sprays of water on this beautiful day, it sure felt good to the kids and they were ecstatic. We also had a slip and slide set up for the kids, which they enjoyed immensely. We had a BBQ with hamburgers, hot dogs, and all the fixings. It was a superb day and the students had a wonderful time. We thanked the brave Fire Fighters for donating their valuable time and equipment to the enjoyment of our students.

Old Pueblo Riders

Ocotillo Residence Hall had an amazing time on April 22, 2012. It was a beautiful sunny day. The students woke up early and had some delicious pancake breakfast with sausages and orange juice provided by the Lion's club. Then the students became very excited waiting to get a ride on all the different and beautiful kinds of motorcycles. The students then rode around campus with the Old Pueblo Riders. Some students rode a few times, which they truly loved. Later in the afternoon around 3:30PM some of the students met up at American Legion Post 109 and enjoyed having lunch with the Old Pueblo Riders. The students enjoyed their meals, but best of all they loved socializing with the Old Pueblo Riders and playing games with their peers. The students returned to campus a bit exhausted, but with beautiful smiles on their faces. April 22nd was a memorable day.

This Year in PE!

Physical education is an essential aspect of students' lives. It not only provides students with an opportunity to increase their cardiovascular fitness but it nurtures teamwork, encourages communication, advances sportsmanship, and promotes life long physical health. This semester held many adventures for students in PE.

The semester began with our climbing unit. Students were introduced to climbing vocabulary and climbing knots. They then learned proper harness placement and safety. Students were able to climb the cargo net, traverse wall, and big wall. Climbing not only helped increased muscular strength but also encouraged balance, core strength, and body awareness.

Frisbee golf was another exciting unit our students found challenging and fun. Students practiced proper Frisbee techniques as well as learned the vocabulary



associated with Frisbee golf. A Frisbee golf course complete with water hazards and other obstacles provided students with an exciting competition.



A local skateboard retailer, Starr Skates, made a very generous donation of 11 skateboards for our wheels unit. Without their kindness our wheels unit would not have been as successful as it was. Students were able to learn many different skateboard skills such as starting and stopping, turning, maneuvering through an obstacle course, and body control.

After the wheels unit, students began swimming. Students were able to focus on specific strokes as well as learn general water safety. Included in this unit is our very own Wipeout obstacle course. Students and staff really enjoy the course and are often seen racing through it on a daily basis!

Overall the PE year was jam packed with many exhilarating units and thrilling, fun lessons. We can't wait until next year so we can start new physical education adventures.

